Children's Column

Bedtime.

Three little girls are weary—
  Weary of books and play;
Sad is the world and dreary—
  Slowly the time slips away.
Six little feet are aching,
  Bowed is each little head;
Yet they are up and shaking
  When there is mention of bed.

Bravely they laugh and chatter
  Just for a minute or two,
Then, when they end their clatter,
  Sleep comes quickly to woo.
Slowly their eyes are closing,
  Down again drops their head—
Three little maids are dozing,
  Though they're not ready for bed.

That is their method ever—
  Night after night they protest,
Claiming they're sleepy never—
  Never in need of rest.
Nodding and almost dreaming,
  Drowsily each little head
Still is forever scheming
  Merely to keep out of bed.
—English Magazine.

A Scare-Sparrow Invention.

It is easy enough to invent a scarecrow that will scare a crow, but it is quite another thing to find a scarecrow that will scare a sparrow. Place the ugliest scarecrow or "scare-sparrow" on the roof of a house and the saucy little sparrows will go and build their nests in the pockets of the coat. With this fact in mind an inventor has patented in Washington a "sparrow-scarer," which, according to his plans, is to be placed on the eaves of houses or suspended among foliage. It is in the form of a very fierce old cat, with bright, long, stiff whiskers, glaring eyes, and a short, stubby and erect tail. Such a terrific beast, swaying in the branches of a tree, would be enough, the inventor thinks, to frighten the wits out of any bird. But he evidently doesn't know the English sparrow. It would pull out the dummy cat's whiskers and build a nest in the crook of its tail.—Chicago Record.

A Snow Flower.

Travelers in Siberia tell of the wonderful flower that grows there, and which blooms only in January, when the winter is at its height. The blossom, according to the Pittsburg Dispatch, has something of the characteristics of a "morning glory," lasting only a single day. The flower when it opens is star-shaped, its petals of the same length as the leaves, and about half an inch in width. On the third day the extremities of the anthers, which are five in number, show minute glistening specks, veritable vegetable diamonds, about the size of a pin's head—these are the seed of the flowers. A Russian nobleman named Anthoskoff took a number of the seeds to St. Petersburg. They were placed in a pot of snow and frozen earth. On the coldest day of the following January the miraculous flower burst through its icy covering and displayed its beauties to the wondering scientists. The plant has been very appropriately named "the snow-flower."

Smallest House in the World.

The Boston Globe says that a French paper has been making inquiries as to the smallest house in Paris, and has published descriptions of two liliputian structures that are in some respects very remarkable.

The house which is announced to be the most diminutive in Paris is, in fact, the smallest, the slimmest, the the most remarkable within the limits of any city in any civilized portion of the world. It is No. 39 Rue du Chateau d'Eau.

It occupies the ground space of an alley that runs between its neighbors on either side, now respectively Nos. 38 and 41. Its actual width is three and one-third feet, its depth nine feet. It is two stories high.

The upper story communicates with No. 41, and is used as the recipient of the cradle of a baby four years old.

Of course there is room here for quibbing. No. 39, it may be urged, is simply an annex to No. 41. But, as La Nature observes, the fact that it has a number constitutes it a separate building.

If La Nature's arguments be not accepted by the sticklers, then the smallest building in Paris is just at the spot where the Rue de Clery merges into the Rue de Beauregard. The two streets converge into a blunt end not quite seven feet wide. On this end is the facade of a building which occupies a total area of 37 square feet.

The rooms on the lower floor are smaller than any of the rooms in the New York "spite house." More than this, in the latter structure the bay windows on the Lexington avenue side give it a maximum width of a little over seven feet, which exceeds the maximum width of the Parisian house.

Doll Makers.

How many little girls when they hold their dollies in their arms, ever think of the many people it takes, and the time and material it takes to make one doll? There is a town in France where all the men and women, and very many of the children earn their living by making dolls. The bisque of which the heads are made is a species of clay composed of lime and earth. This is beaten and trampled and mixed and then steeped for several days. After that it is washed and strained again and again until it is as white as snow. It is now half liquid. The next process is to pour this into molds, and if you have ever broken the head of a doll and taken the face in your hands entire, you will hold what the doll-makers know as a mold, in shape though not in material. These molds are of seventeen sizes. When the clay or bisque is dried for the mold, it is next delivered to women, who insert eyes and put on ears, and after this is done the faces, which are white, are baked in an oven, one thousand at a time, and sometimes more than that. After cooling, the heads are polished with sand-paper and then colored to resemble flesh. The eyelashes and the eyes are painted, and then the heads are baked again. The wigs are then put on, and the doll's head is ready for the body, and then it is delivered to a dear, kindly little mother, who dresses and cares for it with infinite patience, and loves it almost as much as if it were a real live baby.—The Outlook.

A Poppy Five o'Clock Tea.

"Will you come, Milly?"

"'Course, Madgie Barnes. When is it going to begin?"

Madge's breath escaped in a little short puff of scorn, and how the corners of her little red mouth drew up!

"When do you think a five o'clock tea-party begins, Milly Plummer, if 'tisn't at five o'clock?" she said.

"Oh!" Milly said meekly. They were standing beside the big, long poppy bed that ran way across the front of the house, under the windows. Most of the poppy blossoms had gone to seed and stood up stiff and straight and homely. Here and there, though, a flower waved its red petals gaily. Milly picked off a seed-cup, and broke it open to see the big family of tiny, new, milky seeds inside, and that led her to ask:

"What makes you call it a poppy five o'clock tea-party, Madgie?"

"You wait and see," Madgie said.

Of course you couldn't expect two little girls to wait a whole afternoon for a tea-party, so mamma helped them out by lending them the little worn-out nursery clock. Madgie set the hands at five o'clock and then tinkled her little tea-bell for the "company" to come. She had set the table down under the Northern Spy tree.

"Oh, my!" cried the company at sight of it. "Oh, my! what cunning, dear little dishes!"

The little hostess danced excitedly around the table. "Aren't they sweet?" she cried. "And I made them my own self, Milly Plummer!"

"Truly and honest, cross-your-heart, Madgie Barnes?"

"Yes I did, hope-to-never! I made them out of—what do you s'pose?"

Milly took up the quaint little tea-pot and looked at it carefully.

"Out of poppies, that's what!" she exclaimed.

"You stuck in noses and handles and things and turned them wrong side up-most—aren't they too cunning to live?"

"Well, they did live a little while ago, up in our poppy bed," laughed Madgie. "Mamma showed me how to do it—the same as she used to when she was a little girl. It's real easy. See, you take a nice big seed-cup and cut off the stem and upside down it—so. Then you put in a piece of stem for the nose and another piece, curved round, for its handles. That makes the tea-pot. The sugar-bowl has a cover made out of a piece of another poppy and all emptied of seeds so that it will set down over. I let the seeds stay in the bowl-part for sugar, you know. See the cunning little handle on the top of the cover! It grew right there on purpose, Milly Plummer! And look at the dear little cups—they're just as easy to make, too! You empty out the seeds and cut off the top and stick in a little handle, so."

"Oh, what a beautiful tea-set!" the delighted "company" cried. "And to think that it grew!"

"Yes," cried the hostess, "and was alive just before tea!"

If there's a gone-to-seed poppy to be found anywhere, I advise the little girl who may read this story to get it quick, and see for her own self what a charming little teapot it will make. And if it has brothers and sisters in the poppy bed, be sure and make a whole little set like Madgie's, and have a Poppy Five O'Clock Tea.—Annie H. Donnell, in The Favorite.

The pecan crop in Texas is unusually large.

GREAT TRIBAL FISH MEET

HOW THE CHEROKEES ANNUALLY DESTROY THOUSANDS OF FISH.

Poison Made by a Secret Process Is Used to Stupefy the Finny Victims—Boatloads of Fish Caught—Feasting and Ceremonies as Long as the Fish Hold Out.

The annual fish poisoning and frying season of the Cherokees opened two weeks ago at Mitchell's mill and a dozen or more other places on the Illinois river in the Cherokee nation. The destruction of fish by the Indian secret process of poisoning is enormous, and will result in the almost complete annihilation of the last year's growth.

The great tribal fish meet has occurred annually from time immemorial, but this year it has been made an occasion of more than unusual importance, and the festivities attending it have been of the gayest order. Thousands of Cherokees have been in attendance, and it has been the meeting place of all the chiefs and the captains of the two regularly organized political parties, who, according to tribal custom, gathered together to talk over matters pertaining to the continued perpetuation of their present political rights and the continued peace, prosperity and happiness of the Cherokee people in general.

Before their removal West, a little more than two centuries ago, and for a hundred years previous thereto, the Cherokees and other tribes held undisputed possession of a vast area of country extending over what is now Georgia, the Carolinas, Tennessee and Alabama. A glance at a map of those states will discover many names of rivers of purely Cherokee origin. Upon all those streams the Cherokees in the long, long ago, held annual high carnival, and not a few of the old timers present on the Illinois river now were present then, for some of them are more than 100 years old and cannot until this day speak a word of English.

Extensive preparations are made in advance. All the members of the tribe within a region extending sometimes for many miles are notified by the clan captains of the date when the festival will begin. The Cherokees are divided up into clans, as the Bird clan, the Tiger clan, and half-a-dozen other clans, and certain ones are chosen to lead in these annual gatherings. Several days before the different clans come together the poison is placed in the river. The dispensers are captains, selected from the various clans, who look upon their official positions as places of great honor.

The process of making the poison is kept secret, only the tribal medicine men being acquainted with the details of manufacture. No white man has ever been able to discover the exact ingredients of the mixture. Buckeyes, that grow on the bottoms of the Illinois river, form a part of the poison, and great numbers of them are gathered and put through a process of drying and pulverizing. They are then mixed with unknown herbs. The poison is placed in the river about two days in advance of the meeting time, in order that the fish may become thoroughly inoculated, so they can be easily taken when the people are called together.

The effect of the poison is not instantaneous, nor is it fatal. The fish readily swallow it, and when the effects begin to be felt they dart about in a semi-crazed manner, shooting up and out of the water very often, or seeking the surface around old driftwood, where they often lie as if pausing for breath. It is not uncommon to see large, red-eyed trout, big catfish, or a fifteen-pound buffalo or redhorse lying so helpless that it is no trick at all to step up and flip him out of the water upon the bank. The poison sometimes paralyzes the fish so that they turn over on their backs and float as if dead. The poison soon leaves them however, and if they do not take another dose of it they regain their senses and activity.

It is not a part of the program to allow any fish to recover if it can be prevented. When the poison takes hold sufficiently to craze or benumb the fish, the Indian is ready to commence the deadly work with his spear or bow. Bows and arrows are also used, especially by the women, and there is scarcely a child who cannot use these with deadly effect.

Sometimes whole boatloads are speared during an outing of a few hours. When enough fish for a feast have been slaughtered, huge log heaps are prepared and set on fire. When reduced to coals and ashes the fish frying begins. Preceding the ceremonies, which are a sort of tribal religious worship, in which the Indians bow and pat their feet and hands, and moan and grunt dolefully, the fish are wrapped singly in heavy brown paper and thrown into the hot ashes, where they are allowed to remain until the religious part of the feast is completed. When taken out the fish is very palatable, the flesh readily separating from the bones, making a most delicious dish. A large circle is then formed, and all sit down and are served with the fish without dishes of any kind, the only accompanying food being a plain bread called kee-nut-chie, composed of equal parts of the goodies of hickory nuts and walnuts and Indian corn or maize, crushed between two heavy stones. This closes the festivities for the day, the same program being carried out the next day, and continued in the same manner as long as the fish holds out.

RUNNING THE FAST EXPRESS.

The Train Despatcher Has More to Do With it Than the Engineer.

George Ethelbert Walsh contributes an article on "Running the Fast Express" to St. Nicholas. Mr. Walsh says:

The eyes of the engineer are on the clock and time-table before him, and he keeps a sharp lookout ahead. For various reasons he may fall a few minutes behindhand at one point, but he manages to make up the loss at another. He has certain stops to make, and he makes all speed possible between them. But he is not master of the road. At any moment a danger signal along the line may confront him. He may be ordered to bring his train to a standstill at a small way-station, and there receive telegraphic orders to run on a siding. He asks no questions, but obeys orders. Five minutes later a "special" may rush past him, and then the signals are set again, warning the engineer that he must make up for lost time.

To understand this delay, and the sudden changes made in the time-table, it will be necessary to go back to headquarters and to watch the general superintendent and the train-despatcher Although many trains running on the line are hundreds of miles away, the exact position of every one, every second in the hour, is known and recorded. A telegraph operator is working industriously in the office of the train despatcher, receiving and sending orders. The running-orders of all the trains are directed from this office. Each engineer has orders to make a certain run according to the time-table, unless other orders from headquarters interfere.

If an accident happens on the road, the train-despatcher knows it almost as soon as the passengers. A breakdown of some local train on the main line may upset all the calculations of the day. Immediately the expresses running on that line must be stopped before a collision occurs. A snowstorm may blockade a train on the northern branch of the road, and thereby make necessary a change in the regular schedule.

A train from the west is half an hour behind, perhaps, and this interferes with the regular running of the other trains. Arrangements must be made to let trains pass without accident. The express trains nearly always have the right of way. A western express may be behind time, and start out five minutes ahead of some special express. In this instance she must give the special the right of way, and she is forced upon some siding. The special express passes without losing a minute.

There are fifty trains coming and going, one behind time, another ahead, probably, and each crowding out another. The train-despatcher has to regulate this tangle and keep things running smoothly. Thus it is that the engineer of the flyer may suddenly find himself side-tracked.

Should the train despatcher make a mistake, or fail to make arrangements for two fast-moving trains, the block-signal system would probably prevent an accident. The block-towers are connected by telegraph lines, and a bell code enables the men to communicate directly with each other. They can stop a train at any moment by means of their signals, independent of orders from headquarters. Thus the engineer depends entirely upon others to keep the track clear, and he merely runs his train as near schedule time as possible, and keeps his iron steed in perfect condition.

Immense Tree in Maine.

Jay, Me., claims one of the biggest trees in Maine. It stands on the banks of the Androscoggin, on the lawn of the late Dudley Bean. The circumference four feet from the ground is 23 feet, diameter seven feet. About six feet from the ground there are seven branches radiating from its trunk which are from 18 inches to 24 inches in diameter. The branches spread over a space of ground 270 feet in circumference or 90 feet in diameter. Where the branches leave the trunk of the tree, about seven feet from the ground, there has been erected a band stand, which seats 25 persons. A cooler place on hot days cannot be found. A Boston gentleman was riding by recently, and the tree attracted his attention. He examined and measured it and was astonished at its dimensions. He went away with the remark that if the tree was on his lawn $10,000 wouldn't buy it. It was set out 42 years ago by Lafayette Bean on the day of his departure for California, whence he never returned.—Boston Record.

Gallantry.

She—Why is it that they always have the pictures of men on the bank notes.

He—Oh, my dear, if they had ladies' faces on them we never would be able to pass them.—Yonkers Statesman.

BEYOND.

Oh, the heart burnings!
And yet we cling to life and fain would be
One of the mass of struggling souls
Borne on the tide of grief and pain
Out to the widening sea.

That sea of death—
Beyond its dark, sad, silent depths
We see a far-off shore,
A glistening beach o'erstrewn with wondrous shells,
Whose names are Joy and Peace and Love.
And we may gather these,
If on our journey there we keep our hearts but true.
—Detroit Free Press.

HUMOROUS.

Perseverance has very little time to admire itself.

If pigs had a family tree it would surely be well rooted.

Gamblers are often no more than chance acquaintances.

"What does young Spiggott do for a living?" "Breathe."

Everybody loves a lover—with the possible exception of the old man and the dog.

Boarders are apt to have liver complaint when it is served to them seven times a week.

Never fail to rejoice at your friend's good fortune—he may be able to do something for you.

Ella—How do you like the fit of my new jacket? Hattie—Fit! Why, it's more like a convulsion.

"Stays downtown every evening till midnight? Why, I thought he was a model husband!" "He is—'97 model."

Friend—What sort of luck did you have in Wall street? Ex-Operator—Fair; I got away with some of my money.

The guest who fails to tip for three successive meals will notice the waiter's thumb in his soup. This is a rule of the union.

Restful Ways—I take everything that comes my way. Second Story Bill—So do I; and when they don't come I go after them.

Tommy (whose questions had been legion)—Pa, where did Adam get the names for all the animals? Father (absently)—From the dictionary, of course.

"Hannah," said the mistress, "you can take that brown serge dress of mine and put it in soak." "Yes'm," said Hannah; "who's your favorite pawnbroker?"

He—Miss Roseleaf's complexion is very delicate. She (without the least touch of malice, of course)—Very; I've known a single application of soap and water to ruin it.

"They tell me, Grimly, that your daughter sings with great expression?" "Greatest expression you ever saw. Her own mother can't recognize her face when she's singing at her best."

Mrs. Henry Peck—Bah! I only married you because I pitied you when nobody else thought anything about you. Mr. Henry Peck—(wearily)—Ah, well, my dear, everybody pities me now!

Little Teddie—Did our baby come right to us from heaven? His Mamma—Yes, darling; right straight down. Little Teddie—I guess he must 'a' lit on his feet, an' that's what makes him so bow-legged.

Hostess (to our Pet Author, who has just spent a happy couple of hours describing his works)—Goodby, dear Mr. Ego-Smith. Come again soon. We promise not to mention your books. You must be so tired!

An old lady, walking with her two grown daughters on a moonlight night, displayed her knowledge of astronomy by pointing heavenward, and exclaiming, "Oh! my dears, do look at them beautiful stars, Juniper and March."

Stephen—But, Uncle John, whom do you mean when you speak of the "best citizens?" Uncle John—Well, there is myself, for instance, and—and—and—I presume there are others, but they do not come to mind just at this moment.

Refusing a King.

His Majesty the King of Tonga, a native kingdom on the east coast of Africa, is in search of a wife. For the past two years he has been despatching offers to various eastern princesses, and it is said that he at one time aspired to the hand of the beautiful Hawaiian princess, but Her Royal Highness did not even answer His Majesty's letter. Then he sought the hand of a lady of high rank in Samoa, but with no success. After this the disappointed potentate turned his attentions to the Fiji Islands for a fitting mate to share the glories of the Tonga throne. But the princess of Fiji declined the honor. His Majaesty is still, therefore, available.

Laughing Is Useful.

An English scientist, Dr. H. Campbell, has come to the conclusion that laughing is one of the most useful of muscular exercises. It induces people to expel the most of the air from the lungs and fill them up again to the brim, which, under ordinary circumstances, they seldom do, as few are aware that deep breathing is the best of all tonics.

Insurance against accident and sickness is made compulsory upon all citizens of Switzerland.